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Christianity and Society

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD TODAY: A SYMPOSIUM

by

JOHN HUTCHISON, CHARLES ARBUTHNOT,
SAM FRANKLIN, CHARLES C. WEST,
EDMOND L. CHERBONNIER

ULTIMATE LOYALTIES AND OUR PRAGMATIC MENTALITY

by

ROGER L. SHINN

SUMMER 1948 40 CENTS

Volume 13 Summer 1948 Number 3

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

A Quarterly devoted to Christianity and Social Reconstruction

PUBLISHED BY THE FELLOWSHIP OF SOCIALIST CHRISTIANS

BULLETIN

The Conference of the Fellowship at Princeton, May 20-21, made important decisions which will be discussed in the next issue of this quarterly. Discussions which have occupied several conferences and correspondence from all parts of the country resulted in the choice of the name: "FRONTIER FELLOWSHIP: Christians for Social Reconstruction." It was emphasized that the decision implies no shift in principles, but gives the Fellowship an opportunity to express its stand more clearly, without confusion with other movements. A report on special contributions indicated enough success to undertake a limited program of expansion.

The Fall Conference will meet in New York, Oct. 21-22.

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Subscription Rate: $1.50 per year; 40c per copy
4 Shillings per year in England
7 Shillings and Six Pence in Australia
Published Quarterly

Mrs. Nola Meade, Secretary, 3041 Broadway, N. Y. C.
English Agent: Ronald Preston, Annandale, North End Road, London N. W. 11
Australian Agent: Rev. H. P. Reynolds
Box 189, Goulburn, N. S. W., Australia

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

VOLUME 13 Number 3

EDITORIALS

America's Eminence

The "rags to riches" theme was popular in our folklore for a century. We were a new nation, whose continental economy offered boundless opportunities to eager and diligent men. We did not believe in the static social stratification of older civilizations. Every one could make his own way in America, and rise from poverty to wealth, if diligence and ability were joined in him.

Rather ironically this "success story" of our folklore has become descriptive of the nation as a whole, as well as of its railroad presidents who started as section hands. At the turn of the century we were becoming a powerful nation but our power did not impinge upon world politics. Britain more or less managed the uneasy balance of power of European politics and thereby the political equilibria of the world. We doubted, when the first world war broke out, whether we had either interests or responsibilities in that conflict. We continued to doubt it with a kind of hysterical doubt after we had been drawn into it peripherally. We took measures calculated to preserve us forever from subsequent entanglements in the movement of world politics, even though it became apparent that the same technics which were responsible for our rise to power were also creating a potential world community, from the vicissitudes of which no nation, and certainly not so powerful a nation as our own, could escape.

We were drawn into the second world war against our inclination and in defiance of the declared policy of our futile neutrality legislation. We emerged from that war, immeasurably the most powerful nation on earth. The hegemony of the western world was thrown in our laps. Britain, whom our isolationists had only recently accused of using us as a catspaw, became as it were a pensioner of ours. It was forced to wait with bated breath upon our willingness to extend the "lease-lend" arrangements of war time to the peace time requirements of western Europe. If we had failed the living standards of Britain and the whole of Europe would have fallen catastrophically. This is the dizzy eminence which we have achieved in a mere quarter century.

This "success story" is ironic because it is obviously impossible for any nation to gather adequate experience for such responsibilities in so short a time. The portent of defeat is in such success. Our only chance of survival, with which the survival of western civilization is inextricably joined, lies in a modest recognition of our weaknesses and inadequacies for our task. Yet we are tempted at every point to pride and vainglory. We are tempted not only because it is natural for men and nations to assume that obvious success and obvious power are the proofs of an inner virtue; but also because our inexperience makes us spiritually insecure, tempting us to hide that insecurity by a vainglorious bluster. If ever a nation required the spirit of genuine contrition and humility for its tasks it is ours. The future of the world literally depends, not upon the display of our power (though the use of it is necessary and inevitable), but upon the acquisition of virtues which can develop only in humility.

Consider our inadequacies: We are called upon to champion the cause of "democracy." A large part of the world would like to escape tyranny. But its conceptions of democracy have altered since the day when classical liberalism propounded the theory that justice would flow inevitably from a free expression of all competing economic forces. The rest of the world has learned through bitter experience that justice in a technical civilization must be carefully contrived by discriminate use of political power and the careful equilibration of economic forces. We alone still live in the eighteenth century ideology. The peculiar combination of a continental economy, vast natural resources, and a passion for technics has given our "free" economy a success it has not had in any other part of the world. The more we celebrate our peculiar libertarian form of democracy as the only possible form, the more we embarrass the cause of democracy throughout the world. If we had the imagination to separate what is contingent in our conception of democracy from what is universally valid in the democratc cause, we would be in a much stronger position. The danger is that our success in technics will hide from our own eyes, though not from the eyes of the world, our weakness and parochialism as champions of democracy.

This danger is all the greater because the tyranny which modern democracy faces represents a corruption of the original Marxist revolt against the inadequacies of a liberal society. We were too successful ever to be seriously challenged by this Marxist rebellion. Having never come to terms with what was true in its protest, we are inclined to meet its ideological threat merely by calling attention to what is false in its solution of the problem of justice. It has fortunately or unfortunately become so corrupt an alternative to modern capitalism that it is rather easy to center attention upon its tyrannical vices. But this strategy has no persuasive power among the miserable and impoverished masses of Europe and Asia. In Asia we meet an additional hazard as the champion of democracy because we have failed to live up to our democratic creed in the field of race relations. It may well be that in that field Communism preserves its only uncorrupted contribution to the democratic life.

The world would be in a sorry plight, subjected to the rivalries of two centers of power, even if they had the same political orientation. Its plight is more desperate because one center of power embodies a corrupt alternative to the old liberal society while the other embodies that liberal society in all of its illusions.

A particularly ironic aspect of our situation is that we had overcome those illusions to a much larger degree than the outside world had supposed. But the war and the post-war prosperity made us forget our scruples; and the probable Republican victory this fall will seem to have established those illusions more firmly than will actually be the case.

The plight of the world and our own plight is fairly desperate. It is, however, not a foregone conclusion that we will fail in the responsibilities of our hegemony in the western world. We present the most vivid embodiment of the problem of virtue in all the ages. We will incarnate the democratic cause the more truly, the more we can overcome the pretension of embodying it perfectly. We will stand the more surely if we "take heed lest we fall." Our power will be used the more justly, if we recognize that our possession of it is not a proof of our virtue. Our possession of it is either an "accident" or it is a gift of grace. It is a gift of grace if we recognize history as a realm of divine providence and not as a series of accidents. If it is recognized as a gift of grace, it must also become apparent that every gift of grace which is pretentiously appropriated as our due turns into a curse. Whether our nation can sense both the grace and the judgment of God in its history is thus the pivotal problem in our national destiny.

Morals and Politics

It now seems certain that President Truman is doomed. Either he will not be nominated, or he will not be elected if nominated. If one considers how his fate was sealed between February 1 and May 1, one gets a revealing glimpse into the political order. On February 1 Truman was still certain, according to public opinion polls, of being able to defeat any Republican candidate.

Then it became apparent that the Wallace candidacy would win a wider support than at first supposed. It would certainly result in the loss of New York and California and possibly Illinois in the electoral college. The appeal of the Wallace candidacy is wide because there is general dissatisfaction with our political leadership. But the inner core of the movement is Communist. From the standpoint of that Communist leadership Truman's error was the projection of the Marshall plan. Only a scuttling of that plan could have stopped this revolt. If, as most of us do, we regard the Marshall plan as necessary, Truman's doom was sealed by the support of a necessary policy.

Yet his doom was not quite sealed. That came about through the revolt of the southern politicians against his civil rights program. All right minded progressives support that program. It was more daring than anything Roosevelt ever attempted. Perhaps politicians ought not be so courageous, particularly when they are the head of nondescript political alliances containing incompatible forces. Perhaps the civil rights program was dictated by the hope of rewinning Negro support which Wallace threatened to take into his camp. In any case the Southerners revolted. They would not have dared to revolt against a potentially successful Presidential candidate. They revolted against one whose chances had become problematic. Nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure.

Truman is doomed not because he failed to do the right things but because he was not adept enough in holding disparate political forces together. Only a Roosevelt could do that. And Roosevelt could do it only by endless tricks of strategy and a political ingenuity which constantly bordered on chicane. Even so he could not have maintained the alliance which he headed, if the war had not intervened. Thus Truman is doomed, on another level of analysis, because a political alliance of labor, radical agrarians, corrupt municipal machines, and southern reactionaries was bound to disintegrate in the long run.

Ultimately we must form a more genuine alliance of the real progressives of America. That is why it is shortsighted on the part of liberals to try to reconstruct that alliance under the magic name of Eisenhower. Eisenhower, if nominated, can only be elected because people will vote for him for contradictory reasons. That is hardly the way to build a solid progressive force in America. Might it not be better to lose an election, even though that election is an important one?

What Shall We Do?

The more the international crisis deepens and the more it becomes apparent that our generation will not achieve a stable world, the more we hear the demand that the church give an unequivocal "lead" to the nations, that it "say something" or "do something" which will cut through the anxieties and perplexities of our day. One hears this demand particularly with reference to the problem of atomic weapons. Could not the church insist that these weapons should not be used under any circumstances? Or, if that is impossible, could it not insist that we make the promise at least that we will not use atomic weapons first? Might not such a covenant mitigate the fears of our opponents and make them less truculent? Might it not in any event prevent our nation from the awful calamity of gaining a victory which would not be worth having?

In answering these questions and demands we must first distinguish between

the motives that prompt them. Are they prompted by the desire to establish a "guiltless" position for Christians or do they presume to find the right counsel for the nations? If they are meant merely to establish a guiltless position for Christians, they may be dismissed as containing the same error which every form of perfectionism contains, the primary concern of which is to separate "good" people from the guilt of the world, rather than help bear the guilt of the world. If they are meant to offer relevant counsel to statesmen, they must be judged by their possible efficacy in the life of the nations.

The promise not to use atomic weapons at all establishes a rather arbitrary distinction between this new form of destructiveness and other death dealing instruments of modern war. Why should not such a promise include other almost equally destructive weapons? And if so why not make ourselves wholly, rather than merely partially, defenseless in the hope that our nobility will shame the foe into a corresponding virtue? To ask these questions is to answer them. Wars have become so destructive as to make victory as perilous as defeat. Yet it is impossible to ask a nation or a "civilization" to gamble thus with its life.

Even individuals only rarely reach a height of moral sensitivity which enables them to choose death rather than the preservation of their life by a morally ambiguous means. For nations and cultures this seems a quite impossible demand. One has to face the fact that modern nations and civilizations will probably seek to defend their existence even if it becomes fairly apparent that the whole of civilization is wrecked in the process of that defense. The increasing clarity of this fact in the modern situation imparts a special aura of the tragic to our contemporary situation.

If this moral demand upon the nation is impossible, some of us had hoped that it might at least be possible to persuade the nation not to use atomic destruction first and to make a solemn covenant of this abnegation. If such a promise were made, it might allay present apprehensions in Russia and help to break the vicious circle of mutual mistrust. But would it? The efficacy of such a covenant is impaired by the fact that we have already used the bomb; and that we did so without warning. The Russians would not take such a promise seriously. That alone is not sufficient reason for not making the promise. It might be worth making in order to guard against temptation in our own policy. Nevertheless it has become almost as impossible to achieve general support for this limited policy as for the more absolute disavowal of atomic weapons.

While we debate the possibility of taking unambiguous positions, the actual situation shifts in such a way that it becomes much more important to prevent the nation from slipping into a very great evil than to encourage it to achieve a very great good. The fact that we have a monopoly in atomic weapons and that this monopoly will not last long confronts both the military forces and a certain section of our population with the temptation of using our weapons while we still have a monopoly. We would not be so crude as to start a "preventive" war, if for no other reason than that democratic nations can not easily be persuaded to such a measure. But we could easily be tempted to be less patient with Russian truculence than we ought to be, in order to bring about a joining of the issue while we are certain of our atomic monopoly.

Opposition to such policies is not as spectacular as the proposal for the disavowal of the use of atomic weapons. But it is much more relevant to the actual situation. It is also more relevant than the proposal, for instance, to establish a world government, a proposal which has no immediate relevance at all. But such opposition must be prompted, not by a desire to eescape the moral ambiguities of history but from a knowledge that we can not escape them. The decision against a preventive war must be made with the knowledge

that such a measure may be right in terms of pure strategy. If war is inevitable, it might be better to have it over with, while our supremacy is indubitable. The strategy is wrong, however, because it assumes a prescience about the future which belongs to no mortal but only to God. We have no right to play God to historical destiny. If we can not escape the dread possibility of wrecking civilization in the process of defending our civilization, we can at least refrain from the hysteria and vainglory which makes such a possibility inevitable.

The kind of patience required for living in an insecure world and for meeting truculent adversaries with forebearance as well as firmness, is a religious rather than moral achievement. It accepts the moral ambiguities of our situation as our fate and does not try to achieve goodness, either by fighting Russia in the name of justice or capitulating to Russia in the name of peace. Thus we have a vivid portrayal in our contemporary world situation of the truth embodied in the Christian adoration of the love of Christ as the final form of goodness. It was a guiltlessness which bore the world's guilt and identified itself with it. Our own guiltlessness is not pure enough to become a truly redemptive form of vicariousness. But it will not be made purer by artificial distinctions between our goodness and the world's tragic moral antinomies.

The Italian Elections

Everyone waited with bated breath for the results of the Italian elections. Sighs of relief greeted the results. "Democracy" had been saved. According to our Attorney General, "God" had been vindicated. The Holy Father issued a benign post-election message in which a forgiving hand was stretched out to the erring children who had rebelled against God.

Actually the communists, who lost heavily in the industrial districts of Italy because the workers were afraid of losing the support of the Marshall plan and were tired of political strikes, gained some strength in the rural districts of Italy where debt-ridden peasants, however devout, were ready to defy God in the hope that communism would bring them relief.

We are just as relieved as any one else that communism did not succeed in penetrating into western Europe and changing the whole strategic situation in the Mediterranean. But this was only an initial skirmish. Italian peasants are still desperately poor and it is not at all certain that the Christian Democratic party will carry through a genuine land reform. There is a real danger that it will degenerate into a kind of clerical fascism in an effort to repress communist revolution. The things that must be done in Italy and in the whole of western Europe to provide a genuine alternative to communism are least likely to be done if we remain so certain that our cause is God's cause. Here is the old problem of the relation of religion to the complex stuff of the political order. Communism is a secular religion which has captured God (the dialectical process) completely for its side. That is the basis of its fanatic fury. Our side has enough remnants of a Christian prophetic heritage to be unable to make God quite as completely the ally of our cause. But we come pretty close to it.

There is a special touch of irony in the alliance between American conservative thought and this Italian clerical feudalism. American conservatism is a corrupted form of the classical liberalism which, in another century established the freedom of economic enterprise, against a religiously sanctified feudalism. In its original form it hoped to achieve justice through complete freedom. In its present form it hopes to preserve economic power through such freedom.

We may take a momentary satisfaction in the defeat of communism in Italy. A victory for communism would have altered the whole strategic picture in Europe. But our satisfaction can be no more than momentary. If the Catholic party in Italy does not achieve more genuine land reform

than now seems likely it can not finally stem the tide of communism, even as American conservatism, parading in its libertarian trappings, can not give moral leadership to a non-communist world.

As is usually the case, our cause would be closer to God's purposes if we were not so certain of God as our ally. That is equally true, whether the "we" refers to Italian Catholicism or to American secularism. The latter has rediscovered God in order to claim him as an ally of American democracy.

Revision of the United Nations Charter

It would be foolish to revise the United Nations Charter for the purpose of finding a purely constitutional means of bridging the chasm between Russia and the west, particularly since most of the proposals for such revision would merely destroy the minimal bridge, which now exists. But there are some proposals for revision which have a more realistic purpose.

They proceed upon the assumption that the United Nations intended two forms of security, both of which have become problematic. The one was the mutual security which was hoped for through mutual accord between the great powers. The other was security against possible aggression through the preponderant power of all the nations in the organization, who would presumably unite against a potential aggressor. The rather calculated truculence of Russia has made both forms of security more problematic than we had hoped only two years ago. The security council is still a meeting place between Russia and the west. As such it has a certain value which must be retained. But it is not at all certain that the organization as now constituted gives the non-communist nations sufficient cohesion to guarantee their preponderant power against Russia's possible aggression. The kind of ad hoc cohesion contemplated in the Marshall plan and in possible lease-lend military arrangements with the democratic nations of Europe is obviously not sufficient to preserve the continued economic, political, and military supremacy of the non-communist world. Nor will such supremacy be achieved by the creation of a new European center of power through a European federation. That federation without America, would lack the strength to ward off Soviet aggression.

That is why proposals are being made either to create a wide non-communist alliance of nations within the framework of the present charter or to seek for a revision of the charter which would confront the Russians with the alternative of either seeking a larger measure of mutual security or being faced with a strong alliance. The second proposal is probably the better one. The contemplated alliance is obviously something more than intended by the present charter's provision for regional federations. It ought therefore to be attempted through a revision of the charter; and every step of the way ought to make it clear to the Russians that the west is ready to abandon its plans for a special organization if the Russians are ready to enter into more binding agreements.

In Future Issues

The large amount of space given to the Symposium in this issue has necessitated postponement of several significant articles. Among the important articles scheduled for early publication are L. F. Thornton, Jr.'s "Religion and Secularism," Junius J. Martin's "The Church's New Freedom," and Don Benedict's discussion of industrial chaplaincies. Other contributions from R. F. Flint and from English members are scheduled.

Books to be reviewed in the next issue include Arnold Toynbee's *Civilization on Trial,* Winnifred Wygal's *Reflections of the Spirit,* and Paul Tillich's *The Protestant Era.*

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD TODAY

A SYMPOSIUM

Because of the peculiarly urgent relevance of the purposes of the Fellowship of Socialist Christians to this hour of history, *Christianity and Society* presents this symposium. Members of the Fellowship in locations of strategic importance have been requested to contribute letters answering the following question:

What insights do your present experiences and location give for the social significance of Christianity? What new understanding do you have of problems of freedom and order, of American responsibility in the present world, of the potentialities of liberal forces within labor or government, or of the issues of world peace? We are interested in your answer in terms either of your local situation of your present perspective upon the American scene.

Answers have come from five countries. All the contributors are citizens of the United States who have been in America in recent years. It has been necessary to abridge the letter from China of Charles C. West, omitting parts of the political analysis; the full letter is being published concurrently in *Christianity and Crisis.*

IMPRESSIONS OF THE BRITISH REVOLUTION

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

The title means just what it says. Disliking people who visit a country for two weeks and come away with authoritative opinions I must enter a disclaimer. This is my first trip to Great Britain, and to date my time has been spent almost entirely in Edinburgh, the most conservative city in Scotland, which is the most conservative part of Great Britain. Many times since coming here I have caught myself repeating the well-known line about sleeping through a revolution without knowing that it is taking place. For, revolution it is, and I have little doubt that Britons a century hence will be looking back on events now taking place as one of the decisive turning points in their history.

One more reservation. It seems to me very hard to think one's way, or rather to feel and imagine one's way into the important aspects of another culture, even when they are as similar as the American and British cultures. This fact has come home to me many times in recent months, and never more forcibly than during the royal wedding. I listened to it on the radio and read many of the newspaper articles, and it sounded altogether authentic. Yet I am still not a little puzzled to know what all the shouting was about.

As for British socialism, I had expected, naively perhaps, to find a greater unity of purpose and a wider realization of purpose that seems to be the case. Margaret Marshall in a widely quoted article in the *Nation* deplored the fact that there is so little understanding among Americans of the British revolution. That is assuredly too bad. But one is tempted to add large sections of the British population seem to show a similar indifference toward the momentous events now taking place in their midst. This attitude has many facets. There is, for example, a good deal of muddled thinking. A recent British Public Opinion Poll recorded the fact that better than 60% of the people believe the crisis to be unavoidable, but 66% believe the most recent food cuts to be unnecessary. One observes also not a little whining about such things as the abolition of basic petrol, the small size of the sweets ration and the

like. Much of this whining is altogether understandable in terms of the fatigue of nine years of restrictions and no end in sight. I cannot imagine that the Americans would have taken it as well as the British. Nevertheless it is not in any case a very admirable attitude, particularly when it is linked, as it often is, with a complete lack of realization of how vastly worse is life on many sections of the European continent.

Many of these reactions are concentrated in the middle class. One very disheartening impression for an American observer is to compare conservative criticism of this government with similar attitudes of the Roosevelt haters in America. One is inclined to feel sorry for these folk — on either side of the Atlantic — who have not any more idea of what goes on in the world than a sleepwalker has, who are devoid of any positive thought, and who are consumed with a nostalgia for a lost world and with bitterness for the men whom they mistakenly believe have robbed them of that world. They are politically much less important here than at home, perhaps because the hour is later here. But personally and spiritually they stand as symbols for the desperation and futility of the middle classes.

Politically, conservatism wears a very different face here from the U. S. One recalls the Industrial Charter of the Churchill government, as well as the statement by this year's Brighton Conference of the Conservative Party that it would not seek to repudiate the nationalization of the Bank of England, the coal mines, or the railroads. It is hard to imagine this in an American Republican platform — or Democratic platform, for that matter. One does not know whether to attribute these policies to the greater respect for facts which characterizes British politics, or to a Conservative realization that they can't hope to draw votes away from Labor with anything less.

Another impression I have of British politics is its vastly greater factual maturity. This stands out particularly as one thinks of some things going on recently in the U. S. Congress — the Thomas Committee, the discussions of the Marshall Plan, and so forth. The British may be muddle-headed, but they have their feet on the ground. Churchill may be the spokesman for a vanished world but he does not talk quite as much nonsense as Senator Taft. Perhaps this is because the exigencies of the British situation require one to face facts, while the vast accumulated wealth of the U. S. permits, for a time, a greater degree of lunacy in our politics. Yet one has the feeling that it goes much deeper than the present situation in Britain. Perhaps it is an expression of the same trait that has made so many of their philosophers fact-men, rather than idea-men.

In apparent, but only apparent, contradiction with this trait is the stubborn traditionalism of the British. To read about this, as all Americans do, to know it theoretically, is different from the vivid impression enforced by first hand observation. One sees it in the way they cook their food, the way they build their houses, the way they run their shops and industries, the way they wear their clothes and trim their mustaches. Long accumulated social habits have a vastly greater influence here than at home. This is both good and bad. Many of the habits, like that of Parliamentary government, are excellent ones. This trait served them well during the dark days of the war. When a more "rational" people might have seen the inexpediency of further resistance, it simply didn't occur to these people to yield to Hitler and his streamlined tyranny. But this same traditionalism is costing Britain dearly in industrial inefficiency at the present moment.

If one keeps in mind the puzzling combination of factualism and traditionalism of Britain one begins to understand what I am sure is the case, namely, that freedom — essential human freedom — is more secure here than anywhere else on earth. Concerning the fact I am altogether certain. American reactionaries who talk about regimenting of labor here are talking through their hats. Whatever else this

revolution may be failing to do, it is respecting the essential freedoms and rights of the individual man. And the reason for this lies, I think, in the thoroughly inconsistent but thoroughly British combination of factuality and tradition.

In order to come to more specific analysis, we may recall the phrase, so recurrent in F. S. C. discussions and writings, "social mechanism." To make the metaphor more specific, imagine a motor truck. For its successful operation at least four separate types of factors are essential: (1) a workable engine, (2) the good character of the driver, (3) the skill and good judgment of the driver, (4) minimally passable conditions of the road. None of these factors is reducible to the others. Let us look briefly at the present British revolution in these terms.

Considering the last point first, we may surely say that the present British government is having to drive over the rockiest road any government in modern history has had to travel. What this means is that if democratic socialism is successful here it will have survived the severest possible test. But if it should fail, it would mean, I think, not that the engine is no good but that the road is impassable.

Look at some of the rocks in the road. The recent past in British industrial leadership has been characterized by stupidity, inefficiency, and sheer backwardness. For this the present government pays in worn-out equipment, low production, and disgruntled miners. The war was, of course, also a vast drain on Britain's capital equipment and her wealth. Not only was physical destruction great, but foreign investments were sold to finance the war.

Again, as a Labor party, the present government has had to thread a tortuous path between the requirements of its professed purposes and Britain's economic stringency. For example, wages have risen. For this there is surely abundant human justification, but it has contributed materially to the inflationary pressure which constitutes such a problem. Again working class people are eating better today than ever before, yet at the present moment their food is being financed by the sale of last-ditch gold reserves. It may be, indeed I think it is, good statesmanship to follow this policy, but it is an example of the hard decisions having to be made by this government.

Factors of foreign policy have made the government's road rockier. First is the dissoluton of empire at the precise moment when the government is harassed with imperative domestic tasks. Closely related to this is the inheritance from Churchill of a quite impossible policy of 50-50 collaboration with the U. S. to stabilize the world. Britain simply has not the resources in men or money to carry this out. It is hard to see why Bevin could not have seen this two years ago, but the hard logic of events has now enforced it upon even his reluctant mind.

Russian intransigeance has not made the government's lot any lighter. But more important is the attitude of the U. S. Our abrupt termination of lend-lease was a terrific shock to an already strained British economy. Then when we made the loan, we immediately proceeded to lop off about a third of the three billion dollars by abandoning price control and permitting the consequent increase in our prices. Considering such factors, it is not hard to understand British exasperation with us.

The Cripps plan for closing the gap between imports and exports may be thought of as an attempt to chart the rocky road for the next two years. Will it work? The targets are very ambitious. Britain will have to continue to export everything but the kitchen sink. But there seems to be a moderate optimism about it on the part of people who have a right to have an opinion. But here again, American help through the Marshall Plan and American influence on the market in which British goods must be exported are crucial.

But if the road has been rocky, it must also be added that the driver has not uniformly shown skill and good judgment. There is indeed some excellent judgment

in the Labor government. The entire course of events has changed for the better since the cabinet shuffle last September. No one questions Cripps' first rate ability. The coal output has climbed continuously under Gaitskell. Strachey has long done an excellent job in the thankless post of the Food Ministry.

But there have also been some serious blunders. Bevin's foreign policy has already been mentioned. Shinwell's gamble on a "green winter" over a year ago is another instance. And there has all too often been an inept lack of foresight in facing unpleasant crises. All this, of course, underscores the fact that high ideals and good general principles can never in government be a substitute for sound practical judgment in day to day decisions.

As to the good character or integrity of the driver, I find myself much impressed with the evident idealism of the leadership of the Labor party. Both secular America, where religion is conceived as an ornament of individual life (to be worn or not according to the individual's taste in such things), and Marxist Russia, which regards religion as an opiate, could well ponder the fact that the British Socialism is in very large measure a by-product of the Christian ethic. This orientation, of course, makes British socialism particularly worthy of continuous, careful study by such American groups as the F. S. C.

While in the long run the validity of this position will be vindicated, it is also true that in the short run the way of the harassed men now guiding Britain's destiny is the more heartbreaking because of their idealism. To cite just one example, I bought G. D. H. Cole's new book the other day. It contains blueprints for many needed and excellent reforms in industry and in society generally. Most of them have had to be shelved until the indefinite future, while everybody concentrates on the crisis.

Finally, as to the truck engine — to refer once more to our figure of speech — I cannot help recalling the far-off Utopian days when some of us used to believe that if only we achieved a socialist economy, then as if by some magic all social problems would be solved. How utterly silly that seems here in Britain in 1948! Nevertheless, a new engine that will work — that will work for the sort of terrain over which mankind must travel in the coming years — is altogether necessary. To design and experiment with such a mechanism is a very valuable contribution to human progress. One can perhaps see its constructiveness, when one compares it to the fanatic zeal with which some Americans are trying to combine twentieth century technology and eighteenth century economics.

I think the historic significance of the present Labor government is the considered and deliberate decision of the British nation that only a Socialist government can do the work that government must do in present-day industry and democratic society. I don't think they can or will go back on that decision. Too many decisions already made are irreversible in character. A prominent Labor M. P. was quoted to me the other day as saying that the revolution cannot be considered to be established until a Conservative government is returned to power. At first this remark made no sense at all, probably because I assumed an American frame of political reference. I thought, for example, of what the present Republican Congress has done to what remained of the New Deal. But if one assumes a British frame of reference, I think it does make sense. For it reflects the confidence of most British people that any government will face the facts that have to be faced. It also reflects the characteristically British appeal for a critical scrutiny of the situation by the opposition. It also shows the sort of long-time confidence, which despite the grimness of the immediate situation, characterizes Laborites here. They think, despite its apparent impassibility, despite breakdowns and bad judgment, that they are on the right road. I think they are correct in this belief.

JOHN HUTCHISON

COMMON SENSE AND SYMBOLISM IN BRITAIN

CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

An American in England can scarcely avoid some variant of the following question: How can a royal family and a House of Lords continue to exist in the land of the oldest democracy? Are they not the most obvious denials of the very common sense and sober reason on which that democracy is founded? It is by no means accidental that such a fundamental inconsistency lies at the very heart of Great Britain, for it has its counterpart at every level of national life. It is a paradox which can be described in terms of the tension between British common sense, on the one hand, and a sure instinct for the power of symbols, on the other. In these terms it is possible partially to interpret the British national character, and thereby to gain some insight into the limits within which British politics are apt to be contained.

One has only to stand in a bus queue in England to know that he is in the land of common sense. No matter at which end of the queue the bus stops, passions are controlled and impulses channeled in strict observance of priority for the line's senior members. The same rational insistence on first things first manifests itself in the famed unimaginativeness of the British diet. Although austerity measures have virtually eliminated variety from the menu, there are still five or six different vegetables available; but the attitude toward food remains so predominantly functional that a given restaurant will continue to serve nothing but potatoes and brussel sprouts every day in the week. When an American student's wife was cooking some squash recently, her landlord evinced the greatest curiosity in what he thought must be an American product. He had never seen a squash before in his life. In the university classroom, sober reason expresses itself as a great suspicion of all generalizations, abstractions, and principles of interpretation, with a resulting emphasis on critical, rather than constructive scholarship.

Side by side with this matter-of-factness, one encounters on every hand the recognition of the powerful role of non-rational elements in human behavior. The vestiges of the past which common sense would long since have pruned away as anachronisms persist as tangible testimony to the common British heritage, claiming allegiance through an appeal, not to reason, but to imagination and veneration. Be it the white wigs of court officials, primogeniture, the non-decimal relationships between pounds, shillings, and pence, or the daily allotment of one minute's radio time to Big Ben, the Englishman is surrounded by countless concrete embodiments of the intangible forces in the national consciousness — and unconsciousness. Parliamentary procedure is especially rich in ancient usages which have become symbolic of freedom or solidarity. The dignity of the House of Commons is "enacted" at the beginning of each daily session, which is opened by a formal procession of various dignitaries and clerks in wigs, breeches, and buckled shoes, preceded by the bearer of a great mace whose presence signifies that the House is in session. Inside the chamber a line on the carpet runs parallel to the front row of benches. Centuries ago, a speaker who stepped across the line was out of order, because he could then reach members of the opposition with his sword. Today he is still out of order, in tribute to the method of settling disputes by words instead of swords. This respect for the non-rational, intangible forces in society was strikingly illustrated during the parliamentary debate on the income Princess Elizabeth and her husband should receive. A left-winger who wanted to reduce the figure made a haughty reference, in the best common sense tradition, to "the young man known as the Duke of Edinburgh"; but the significant fact was that he did *not* refer to Phillip Mountbatten.

In the face of the opposition between common sense with its distrust of the unseen, on the one hand, and a deep appreciation of the symbolic, on the other, the question naturally arises: are these two forces reconcilable, or is Britain a schizophrenic nation? A clue to the partial resolution of the contrast lies in the fact that for an Englishman, common sense always depends for its criterion on reference to *experience.* And since experience includes more than the merely rational elements of human nature, the way is left open for a rapprochement between reason and imagination, between conscious and inconscious, between the matter-of-fact and the symbolic. This mutual accommodation underlies a great part of British political wisdom, and in particular delineates the contrast between British common sense and the renowned French capacity for rational clarity: in proportion as a "clear and distinct" political plan is removed from the non-rational factors in experience, to the same extent is such a plan unworkable. Tied as it is to the test of experience, British common sense is bound to be politically conservative — to put its faith in the tried and true methods of the past. But at the same time, just because it does take its cue from experience, it safeguards conservatism against stagnation. It is just the very *experience* of one depression which goads the Englishman into preventive measures against another — in contrast to the paralysis in some quarters as history threatens to repeat itself on the other side of the Atlantic.

There can be no more eloquent witness to British political genius than the current social, economic, and political changes. In a country where privilege has been as deeply entrenched as anywhere in the world, if not so abused, the magnitude of these changes is matched by their relative smoothness of execution, and by the absence of the hysteria which might lead to the spectacle of a committee on un-British activities. While common sense realism faces resolutely the necessity for austerity and self-denial, Englishmen are also surrounded by a thousand symbolic reminders of their historic continuity, culminating in the person of the King. The King *is* Britain in a way in which no person or thing could ever *be* America. On the day of the royal wedding, landladies in Cambridge lit candles in their halls, and the tenor of newspaper editorials plainly indicated that for the Englishmen all that he holds dear in marriage became embodied on that day. In America, by contrast, neither the flag, nor the constitution, nor the eagle can embody the personal element in national ideals, and the presidential office not only lacks continuity, but is in the thick of partisan politics, rather than above them. An American has to be content with the picture of his party's last successful candidate.

As the American contemplates the countless ways in which British national unity and culture find explicit embodiment, he is naturally subject to a degree of wistfulness at the historical antiquity and homogeneity of population which make this possible. His own young, heterogeneous country will have to find her own way under her own special conditions. Although these conditions may impose privations in some respects, they offer peculiar advantages in others. In particular, they lend themselves to a degree of streamlining and efficiency unknown and inconceivable in Britain. This independence of the encumbrances of the remote past, which has already given rise to an unrestricted technology, also involves an advantage which has not yet become actualized to the same extent; namely, freedom from accumulated intellectual debris and inhibitions. The reality of this American potentiality vis-à-vis Britain is nowhere better illustrated than in the Englishman's own reaction to any suggestion of opposition or conflict between British common sense and symbolism. The fact is, he sees no opposition, indeed no difference, between them at all. He seems afraid to recognize the irrationality of his own symbols, perhaps for fear of destroying them, and will go through re-

markable mental gymnastics in an effort to deny their paradoxical relationship to common sense. Herein may lie the root of the renowned English refusal to grant the discrepancy between the facts and the theory behind them, and the consequent elaborate rationalizations which have looked like hypocrisy to colonial subjects. An American who asks in the name of common sense why so many streets change their names every two or three blocks, or why odd numbers sometimes begin at the opposite end of the street from even, will get no satisfactory reply. He may get a shrug, or he may get a serious explanation. But one conclusion he can certainly draw: any suggestion of incongruity between British common sense and symbolism is definitely *not* funny. In so far as an ancient heritage places such limits on the capacity for self-analysis, its enviable advantages are not completely unmixed.

EDMOND L. CHERBONNIER

THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE OF A NATION

GRENOBLE, ISERE, FRANCE

Evidently Protestants, with all the organization and good will in the world, cannot be much of a political force in a country in which they number only 2% of the total population, as in France. But their influence is rather greater than one would guess just by counting noses. They represent in a remarkable way the social conscience of the nation; perhaps, though I wouldn't push this too far, in a way analogous to the Jews in the United States. That is to say that among Protestants one finds critical, prophetic spirits who are offended by the compromises of power politics, who are highly developed intellectually and ethically, and whose defense of freedom is characteristic. It has been very interesting to me, for example, to observe how the period of French defeat and occupation played into the hands of the Protestants, allowing them a maximum effectiveness with a minimum of actual numbers.

Theirs was, I believe, the first voice to be raised publicly and unitedly against Hitler's application of the racial laws in occupied France. Protestants knew only too well from their own bitter history what it meant to be a persecuted minority, and early in the occupation took organized steps to help Jews escape into safer countries. Nearly every pastor I have talked with in my region close to the Swiss border had regular underground channels to pass Jews into Switzerland. Having a tradition of Calvinist activism and sensitiveness to tyranny it was a comparatively easy matter to pass from the phase of "evasion" to active resistance. The old Huguenot motto "Resistez!" fit perfectly; it called forth the grimmest determination in this small, closely knit group that could detect a potential oppressor a mile off. Protestants played a daring role in the Free French movement generally and consequently paid great sacrifices.

It is probably true to say that twenty years ago, had the little Church been confronted with this crisis, it would have called for peace and quiet. But a kind of theological and organizational revival took place in the twenties and thirties which made the Church again proud of its rigorous ethic, its critical, minority status vis-à-vis all earthly powers. Barthianism filled a theological vacuum until it sometimes bristled; statesmanship got splintering churches together in an almost completely united Church. The combination of doctrinal vigor, unity, and the role as the traditional defenders of freedom on a religious basis gave French Protestantism an unparalleled opportunity before the French nation.

I should add that the social awakening is so general in the Church now and one is so reconciled to this independent minority status that the Church finds it quite easy

to take advanced positions on social issues. Vested, unproductive property, bourgeois virtues, are under attack by leading pastors and laymen. I have been told that probably half the lay folk vote Socialist (Leon Blum variety) and that the percentage is even higher among pastors. The Church as such keeps hands strictly off party politics, however, and I do not know of a single case of a French pastor who is a candidate for party office.

It is easier, in a sense, for clarity on domestic issues of justice and freedom, for Protestants to be part of a minority in which one can identify oneself with the victims. In international issues, on the other hand, it seems to me that French Protestants have no surer judgments than we, and are subject to the same temptations of undue utopianism or undue fear. But it is true that in internal questions they have much to teach us. They have had their revival and their decision to unity, which makes for a fruitful life in social action.

CHARLES ARBUTHNOT

"EIGHTY MILLION PRISONERS OF WAR"

TOKYO, JAPAN

If readers of *Christianity and Society* needed further grounds for the strengthening of their convictions and reaffirmation of their purposes, the situation in Japan today would provide it. Here as elsewhere the times demand unequivocal, courageous witness to God's justice and His love in the form of social analysis, affirmation, and action.

Consider the economic field. Here the basic fact is profound, long-continued dependence on the United States. With four-fifths of her small islands untillable, and the highest population per arable square mile in the world, Japan is far from being agriculturally self-sufficing. She must export manufactures and import food and raw materials, or starve. The loss of colonies and fishing areas has accentuated this condition. The closing of the doors of trade in Korea, Manchuria, and China makes it staggeringly difficult. If Soviet Russia is the battle axe in the hand of Jehovah to execute His judgment, fortunately the mere brandishing of this weapon has led a reluctant United States to the conclusion that Japanese industrial potential must be built up. Whether this is done as a means of saving eighty million Japanese from inhuman living conditions or merely as a bulwark against the spread of communism, at least loans have been promised and the present industrial level, still less than half that of pre-war years, may be expected to rise. The lesson of the Strike Committee report is that even under the most favorable conditions, given the scrapping of the vindictive folly of the Pauley proposals and the granting of reasonable industrial loans, still Japan can not be expected in the next five years to reach the "depression" level of 1930-1934 economy. This means that the economic struggle for many years will be a bitter one, with dangers from the right and the left in the event of crop failure or some special disaster. In an impressive message to the Secretary of the Army early this year, appealing for the release of restraints on the Japanese people, General MacArthur referred to them as being "in all practical aspects, our prisoners of war." In that phrase the unique responsibility that America today holds for Japan is vividly suggested. The mere granting of industrial loans is of course only one step in discharging that responsibility. With the Japanese economy geared to that of the United States as it inevitably will be, the economic downfall of another great nation is involved if American capitalism plunges into another depression. On the other hand, if this relationship is fraught with economic danger to Japan, it is fraught with moral danger for America. It means

that the United States is subject to a temptation unique in her history to create an economic vassal state, where the legitimate return on capital may be supplemented with privileges that constitute long-range exploitation of Japanese weakness. It means in any case that as members of the Occupation Force roll about in their luxurious automobiles or private railway cars, the temptation to assume a master-race psychology is increased. It means that extremes of economic abundance will continue to be paraded before the eyes of an ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed nation. In the person of the Occupation Forces, and to some extent of us missionaries also, Dives continues to feast while the Japanese Lazarus picks up crumbs of corn meal and dried peas (American exports to eke out the Japanese 1300 calories ration) and at the same time listens to edifying discourses on democracy.

To these economic paradoxes we must add those of the political field. The Japanese have had a mass baptism into democracy at the hands of the victors, and it is not surprising if at times it resembles the wholesale acceptance of Christianity in the age of Constantine. Thoughtful critics are complaining that it is a democracy where hedonistic freedom is emphasized and social responsibility is ignored. The wide-spread official corruption and the cynical acceptance of the black market show that it carries with it so far little sense of moral obligation. No one knows the exact strength of communism but there seems to be evidence that just as Christianity has been taken up more rapidly among the intellectuals of Japan than it has been in other Asiatic countries, so communism is making its greatest advances among the better educated groups. In addition to its appeal as a political party and a program, its philosophy of materialistic determinism may appeal because on the one hand it takes seriously the plight of hungry, ragged students and teachers, and on the other, because it rationalizes the nation's defeat by the superior technological resources of the United States. In one country village of which I happen to know personally, I am told that twenty-five students and three teachers of the middle school are avowed communists. They have formed a society for the study of social problems and are active in organizing the local farmers to protest against the heavy burden of taxation which they face.

One of the ablest of the Protestant missionaries in Japan, Dr. William Axling, has summarized the situation by saying that the clock stands at midnight economically but at high noon spiritually. Christianity does indeed face an unparalleled opportunity, but it may well take thought of some of the things it must have if it is to meet the test. First it must have objectivity in guiding judgments in a moral situation where America as a nation is directly involved. It must reveal God's judgment on the deficiencies of western democracy, political, economic, and racial, and it must especially avoid pronouncing an unqualified blessing on the present anti-communist front. If it fails to combat the "holy war" psychology it will work its own moral undoing. Secondly it must present the Christian moral imperative in its full relevance to the social life of small groups, the family, the neighborhood, and the community. The present extreme emphasis on divine transcendence in Japan renders almost any kind of positive moral emphasis suspect, as if it were a competitor of faith instead of an expression of it. One reason is that any attempt on the part of the tiny Christian group to apply Christian standards on a national scale in the past resulted in frustration. Today there is greater hope for influencing national issues, but meanwhile the fruits of righteousness can be achieved in smaller group relations. I think for example of a little group of Christians among a large band of repatriates who are clearing land, living in straw huts, and amid the greatest hardships starting life anew. These Christians wish to set up a truly Christian village, and are meeting regularly to consider how they may effect this purpose.

A third need must be listed mainly in terms of a question. It cannot be met without help from America, and from the other Christians of the world. It is the need of giving a more definite connotation of social morality to the fact of being a Christian. To become a communist means to commit oneself to a certain kind of world in terms of race, class, and economic life. The same thing is true for one who becomes a Christian, as far as personal morality, including sex and family, is concerned. But what of the social symbols of the Christian faith? What should the missionary teach to be the minimal moral standards, accepted by the Christian conscience in general, as to economic and political life? To what kind of activity with respect to potential abundance, which seems to lie tantalizingly within and yet beyond the grasp of modern man, does being a Christian commit us? The youth of Japan, facing at best grim years of economic struggle, have a right to ask such a question. I am well aware that this is not the final question which faith answers, and that this final answer is so stupendous an affirmation as to be quite incommensurable with any other value that this earthly life can hold. Nevertheless, the One who is the Goal is also the Way. The vision of man's ultimate good does not numb the moral sense, but quickens it, to discriminate among relative goods. Our righteousness has to exceed that of those who reject our answer, rather than falling below it. There have been strong, hopeful words spoken by the Church at Oxford and elsewhere, and by individuals here and there. It is a joy to bring some of the results of the highest social thinking of the western Church to the Japanese after their years of isolation. But these things are still far from being a main concern. Jacques Maritain declares that a community must be defined by a work to be done, and the Christian community, in its earthly life, is no exception. Our problem is not that our social objectives and standards are too difficult—it is rather that they are lacking. Until they are defined, and ratified by a devotion that exceeds that of the secular radical to his purpose, the Christian missionary will not be able in the fullest sense to "speak to the condition" of those to whom he brings the Gospel.

SAM FRANKLIN

REDEMPTIVE OPPORTUNITIES AMIDST POLITICAL FUTILITY

PEIPING, CHINA

The tragedy of China lies precisely in the fact that every personal and communal center of creative life, Christian or otherwise, is being crushed by political power conflicts. Both sides in the civil war have abstract centralist solutions in theory to the problem of China's disorder. On the Kuomintang side the reactionary CC clique draws on Chinese tradition to support an authority vested in "virtuous rulers" who guard social harmony by moral admonition and military defense, while the more liberal groups draw up plan after plan for an ideal "national reconstruction." Practically this results in a government based on its army and secret police, suffocated with bureaucracy. Landlords prevent effective land reform. Financial interests use the government for their own profit through exchange control, trade regulations, and other means. Even the military are hamstrung because no general could be trusted with too sweeping a victory. For the average man, meanwhile, this means centralization of landownership, discouragement of local initiative of all kinds (industrial co-operatives are fighting for life despite Chiang Kai-shek's blessing), heavy taxes, conscription, and war.

Communist control operates closer to the grass roots by dividing land and controlling produce, thus destroying the traditional family pattern of ownership. Meanwhile, through propaganda, use of the *doujeng* (compulsory meetings for public accusation and punishment of "enemies of

the people" and for transacting other business), and recreational arts, the Communists try to supplant the traditional Chinese outlook with a mass spirit. There is no denying the practical effectiveness of their activities in rejuvenating many a Chinese village. It might even be argued that the average farmer is a freer, more creative personality under Communist rule than under the Government, for initiative along certain technical and economic lines at a very primitive level is encouraged. But the freedom is tragic because its limits are absolute and ruthless.

Chinese liberals tend to accept the inevitability of Communism, although only a minority of them welcome it, as preferable to the present chaos and despair, because it satisfies their basic demands. It carries moral authority because it is less corrupt than the Kuomintang. It carries spiritual authority because it is doing a better job behind the lines of organizing social welfare. It would be wrong to call this welfare justice. It applies in such degree, in such places, and to such people as the authorities choose. But in the thinking of most Chinese there is no higher justice by which to judge this order. Immediate solution of the problem of bread for millions takes absolute precedence in most minds over all spiritual values and long range hopes.

So it is that the Chinese, traditionally a humanistic, pragmatic people, are knuckling under to collectivist absolutisms. One can point out the tragic lack of transcendent faith which leaves the people without defense or hope beyond the range of earthly power. China's struggles have produced few martyrs by choice, even among Christians, although many of the latter have suffered and died heroically under an oblique kind of persecution. (Christians are especially subject to the *doujeng* process on other than religious counts.) Few people are confident that the ideal or principle in which they believe is transcendent over the present situation. Few feel that their life has a meaning not fulfilled in history.

And this, a friend has pointed out, makes thinking Chinese ripe for the Marxist, but not the Christian idea of dialectic in history. The Chinese have always distinguished the absolute and the relative on the historical plane. But the absolute is a goal to be kept in mind and approximated, not a judgment on our failures. The relative, whether in governments or personal relations, can be accepted without tension if it seems the best possible. Into this picture Marxism has injected the rather exciting idea of dialectical conflict. Now the Chinese can see the function even of strife and evil in bringing forth its opposite. He can abandon the eternal compromise which is his heritage, in favor of whole-hearted allegiance to the new powers sweeping his country, confident that science and history themselves will bring forth the traditional ideal. But the Christian view which sees the Kingdom of God beyond history, and all historical forms and decisions under the judgment of God's righteousness, is not popular.

But when all this is said, we must wash the note of judgment from our voices. These people are victims of forces under which few of us would bear effective witness to our faith. Absolute, grinding poverty is China's basic fact. The land is saturated with population at a bare subsistence level, and there is little industry. When one man gets rich, another starves. Death of children through malnutrition is a familiar occurrence among the relatives of our own servants. Even among college students a majority are victims of tuberculosis, and without hope of constructive employment in their field after graduation. A recent competent survey pointed out that in the face of China's pitifully inadequate industrial development, what little she has cannot be effectively used and is slowly wasting away. One can hardly blame Chinese thinkers for seeking order and economic progress at the expense even of the spiritual foundations of that order.

Yet the dominant attitude among students and thinkers is not brute materialism,

but the despair of frustrated idealism, to which every avenue of constructive action is closed. The present generation has learned a bitter lesson from the student idealists of a former day who have now become the peddlers of corruption in the Kuomintang. The selfless eagerness of students to find some field of practical service, the unstinted devotion to duty of teachers here in Peiping, is heartrending in the face of their despair. Although most of them have chosen a lesser evil, few have any real hope, except that of the naive in communism.

This despair in the face of uncontrollable political power, this yearning for a field of freely given service, and the unchallenged ascendancy of Communist theory in this vacuum, all pose the challenge which the Christian message must meet. We must answer Communist interpretations not only with analysis but with alternative understandings of social power and history which take account of the judging and redeeming action of God. We must open to the Christian a line of practical action in this seemingly hopeless situation. Yet we must help the Christian to feel as finally real his citizenship in the City of God, powerfully creative yet never fulfilled in historical forms, strengthened and maintained by God's loving redemption of earthly failures.

In practical terms, it seems to me, we must reject that theology of the state which regards it as justified for maintaining order, even if unjust. The most effective checks on power in China have never been political. The plan of strategy for Christians lies in the redemption of local community life — in vocational service in particular situations where needs can be met. It may well be the function of the Church of Jesus Christ to become the heir and transformer of the sensitive personal and social insights of old China for a time of troubles when this-worldly faiths no longer trust them. It may be the primary function of Christians to cultivate in faith whatever patches of China's life still permit creative work.

This is not, of course, an answer to the power problem, not a strategy for bringing Communist dogma and Kuomintang selfishness to heel. It is rather the conviction that neither side bears enough moral authority over the other to justify the Christian in a political choice. It is further the conviction that China's residual moral and spiritual health lies in the hearts of its people and their community life, and this health cannot be fostered by association, for whatever reason, with devils. In this situation it seems to be the Christian's duty to bear witness to the love of God, and to serve creatively this day, in the faith that such service has eternal value, though its fruits be destroyed.

At the same time this is not a plea for planless absolutism. It is rather a strategic adaptation to the actual strength of the Church (only one million non-Roman Christians), and an alternative to the development of a "third force" in politics. There is practical hope for China in this kind of local reconstruction, if the fruits survive, or even if persons survive who have caught the vision of a new order of community life, and believe it to be an echo of eternal justice and love. To work for economic reconstruction, for justice, order, and new freedom in a local community, is a compassable problem for a group of Christians in that community. But it is also an opportunity such as the national scene does not afford so well, for prophetic witness, and sacrificial service, perhaps even for martyrdom. By what they do to specific villages, the Kuomintang and the Communists must be judged and opposed. And by what creative life and new-found freedom grows in these villages, China will be redeemed. If in the next few years there arises a Christian Church, however small, which gives itself wholly to redemptive work just because it knows that no earthly strategy, but the eternal grace of God, is its foundation, then this Church may call itself the custodian of the hope of China.

CHARLES C. WEST

ULTIMATE LOYALTIES AND OUR PRAGMATIC MENTALITY

By ROGER L. SHINN

Sidney Hook, religiously militant foe of religion and champion of democratic socialism, has in the past year offered this basis for an ethical imperative:

> To be resigned to the contingency of defeat, but to fight like hell for the best possible chance in every alternative, is what the good life in action means.[1]

Such a statement shows the problem which confronts the ethical activist. If the stress be placed on fighting like hell for the best alternative, the fighter risks everything on the outcome. His motivating force is the achievement of a certain program; his happiness depends upon it. The more important he makes the stake, the harder he will fight, and the more he stands to lose if he fails. If, for example, I pour my energies into a fight in an election, and my candidate (the "right" candidate) loses, I shall be far more crushed than the person who casts his ballot in a more philosophic mood. And if I ever really stake everything on an issue and then lose, the result is despair.

But suppose the stress be placed on resignation to the contingency of defeat. Then one is prepared for the let-down. He does not need success to feed upon. But he will probably never fight with all his powers. The politician does not dare admit the possibility of defeat until the polls are closed. If during the recent war someone had recommended that we be resigned to the contingency of defeat, he would have been called a defeatist. Such views, if they have any influence, result in a weakening of the will to fight.

Thus all ethical action faces us with a dilemma. If we regard the issue as all-important, we leave ourselves open to despair when we lose. If we are resigned to the contingency of defeat, we do not fight whole-heartedly.

This dilemma is not oppressive in times when history favors good causes. So long as the contingency of defeat is a mere distant possibility, seldom realized, we need not worry about it much. But in present days, when defeat faces many – perhaps most – good causes, the dilemma does oppress the fighter.

The Christian often feels that his faith can overcome this dilemma. But this is not obviously or automatically so. The same problem may even be intensified.

If the Christian associates his faith with some specific cause, then he will fight urgently and doggedly, but will be unready to face the contingency of defeat. The Roman Catholic church, whose theology identifies it with the kingdom of God, finds itself threatened by communism today. One country after another slips from its power, and the nation within which the Pope has his tiny state rocks on shaky foundations, temporarily shored up by the last election. Thus Catholicism, on grounds of its own doctrine, sees the very meaning of life, the ultimate religious significance of things, challenged. Small wonder it cannot face communism without hysteria and the forebodings of utter despair.

But suppose the Christian identifies his faith with the heavenly kingdom of God, with Augustine's "Church as it is destined to be," with the transcendent sovereignty of God which no earthly event can shatter. Then the Christian need fear no despair. But will he do anything? The churches are full of pious souls who are resigned to the contingency of defeat for any human effort to better the world, and who therefore

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[1] *Partisan Review*, Jan.-Feb., 1947. I have used this statement before (*Christianity and Crisis*, May 12, 1947) but make no apology for repeating it, since it expresses so well the ethical problem of our time.

never try. There are the fundamentalists who, when urged to do something about poverty and suffering, quote scripture, "The poor ye always have with you." There are those who decide that they are pilgrims on earth with no mundane responsibilities — and are therefore capable of looking out for themselves handsomely while in pilgrimage.

Let us apply the dilemma to a specific current issue. It might be the success of the United Nations, or the fateful negotiations for atomic control. But let us take the pressing issue of European reconstruction through the ERP and ECA, since this is an area where Christian conviction has had some immediate efficacy, and an issue upon which the Federal Council of Churches has pronounced explicitly. Furthermore, although aid has been voted for the first year, the program will be an imperative issue for several years to come.

Will the ERP succeed? A dispassionate analysis can point out certain factors of probability, but can give no guarantees. What attitude shall we take? Opponents of the plan argued long about the possibility of failure; if they had convinced many people, the plan would have been rejected, because the only possibility of arousing the necessary effort was to convince the country that this plan is *the* way to meet the present situation. On the other hand, if the country has been convinced that this plan is *the* way to meet the present situation, it will be unprepared for the possibility of failure. Such a failure — and any plan is sure to fail in part, *i. e.,* fail to solve *all* our problems—is likely to produce despair and leave the country unprepared to meet the next crisis — unless we discover greater wisdom than has been evident in these post-war years.

In such a situation Sidney Hook's words are clearly applicable — and equally clearly hard to carry out. We must "be resigned to the contingency of defeat," yet "fight like hell for the best possible chance" amidst the alternatives.

There is, however, always the ideal possibility that men will act on the basis of a faith and loyalty that causes them to fight without counting the cost. The great faiths of history have repeatedly worked that way. Individuals and communities can at times choose to live or die like men rather than cower in order to live like dogs. Such faiths have in them something of the transcendent, the supernatural — at the very least, the super-individual. The histories of Judaism and of Christianity are eloquent testimonies of this power of faith, and examples are not limited to these.

But what would have happened if the ERP, to use our example, had been promoted thus? Can any of us imagine a President going before Congress, leaving out all talk about the demands of wise self-interest, and simply presenting a program to tax the American people and cause great inconvenience and some hardship, because of an ethical or religious responsibility? Can we imagine this even among church people? Could we go to people, tell them that we do not know whether this plan will succeed or not, that it does not matter whether it is to our benefit, but that it is a divine and human demand upon us? Could we leave out all reference to even such worthy hopes as laying a basis for peace, and simply say: "God demands that this people sacrifice themselves for others?"

The thought is ridiculous. We are so accustomed to assess programs in terms of obvious benefits that no other approach seems feasible. Yet human nature makes another possibility —at least at times.

I remember a young hero of the French resistance telling me of the people he worked with in opposing the Nazis. The significant thing was that there was almost no one working with the one motivation which we usually think necessary — the hope of achieving by group efforts a pleasant future. No one urged people to fight for a new and greater France, in which rationing would be removed, steaks would be abundant, and free enterprise would pave the golden streets of an earthly

heaven. Such hopes were nonsense; No one could be duped by them. The nearest thing to them was the motivation of the Communists, who looked for concrete historical achievements; but everyone knows the selflessness and the apocalyptic elements in the communist motivation. The other two groups in the resistance had almost no pragmatic motivation. The one group comprised the existentialists, who fought with the courage of despair precisely because they believed in nothing. No hope could beguile them; their one motive was to assert the individual's freedom against a hostile meaningless world. When captured and tortured for information, they refused to give it, not out of loyalty to a cause, but out of the proud despair of the individual who asserts his freedom against his captor. The other group was the Christians; and they fought simply because they believed in God. They felt the divine imperative; they were loyal to the transcendent God; whether or not they had any earthly hope, their allegiance to heaven directed them.

If all this seems utterly remote from the possibilities before us in America, it should not be remote from the war recollections of many. Men often showed no loss of courage in defeat. It is true that American soldiers, pragmatically trained by a culture which glorified the profit motive to judge every effort by what they might expect to get out of it, were often non-plussed by the thought of an action with no reward. We may indeed wonder whether they could have kept fighting when defeat faced their total cause, as did the Germans, Russians, British, and groups of the French at various stages in the war. But individuals and groups did show themselves capable of fighting purely out of loyalties, when no hope was left.

All this is a burning present issue for us, because the United States has come to the point in history where assured consequences offer no adequate basis for great effort. Whenever we dare to face soberly the probabilities of future history, we know that these probabilities incline toward an atomic and perhaps bacteriological war, and the destruction of the civilization we have known. Estimates of what will happen vary widely, but again the probabilities are for a far more disastrous destruction of civilization than, *e. g.,* the fall of Rome. I am not making any definite predictions; I am simply stating what I suppose nearly everyone would agree are the probabilities, when willing to think about them.

The immediate question is this: Can Christians do anything to prepare the nation, or more specifically the church, for such a likelihood? Can we in the present offer a social imperative which will command response regardless of the fact that an overwhelming failure threatens all efforts? Can we do anything to steady the nerves of people against the hysterical collapse which is likely when the grim truth dawns?

Within Christianity, if not within ourselves, there is the needed imperative and the needed hope. Christianity swept out of Palestine and across the Roman Empire with no plan or hope for shoring up that shaky dominion. It engaged in philanthropies and social service projects so sweeping as to rouse the envious admiration of the pagan emperor Julian, with no expectation of building a utopia or assuring a stable society. It was enough to know that men were suffering, and that God commanded that they be helped and that His message be proclaimed to them; no threat of disaster from barbarians against the empire or from Satan against the world could dull that imperative. The basic Christian hope is inherently a trust in God; it is not linked to the fate of empires or democracies, social projects or apostolic successions. But it is a divine imperative for action expressed in social programs, for love to mankind carried out in every conceivable way, implemented by every possible practical device.

Is it conceivable that our culture, or even our church, could transfer its hopes from immediate expectations of success to the hope of serving God? It hardly seems so. It is not utterly impossible. "God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

He sometimes pours out His grace in crises, and future disaster may realize new possibilities. But so far as we can anticipate, the program is not "feasible." Its only possibility is in the church conceived as a remnant instead of a social force, as a tiny leaven instead of a mass-production bakery. To judge from biblical and Christian history, this may be the real destiny of the church. Perhaps this is the direction in which we should turn our efforts.

But such a plan would mean a major reconstitution of the organization of the church. It would mean a complete change of activity for those agencies of the church which try to influence public opinion in any general way. I, for one, would be unwilling to see that happen. I would not want to give up any of the organizational activities, of the big scale programs, of the attempts of the church to be a significant social force. I am grateful for what the Federal Council of Churches did at San Francisco, for its support of ERP. If we were sure that the future of the church was as an underground, or as the preserver of the values of a destroyed civilization, we might plan now the return to the catacombs, or to creative but isolated monastic communities; and such plans should not be left out of our thought.

But history is unpredictable. There are always signs of hope which we do not see, as there are signs of judgment which we are unwilling to look at. Further, the church will not find its life by seeking to save it. In this crucial day of our civilization the church should be working on the broad fronts for large scale social gains — working as vigorously and as passionately as ever in its history. Christians — even the organized church — should be pushing the ERP, striving to reconstruct and to help men. But they should do this because they seek a city whose builder and maker is not U. S. dollars, but God.

These two missions of the church — that of the remnant and that of the major social force — are those expressed in the ideas of the church against the world and the church within the world. They indicate a tension — but not necessarily a conflict — within the church. The tension is evident in the fact that Christian social activists are talking about and organizing small cell groups. A journal from England tells of dozen upon dozen of communities around the world, ranging from famed Iona to obscure industrial, agricultural, and student groups — all concerned with finding the creative life of the fellowship of faith.[2]

Martin Luther, aware of this tension, suggested the answer of establishing the *ecclesiola* within the *ecclesia* — the small band of committed Christians within the larger social organization. The dangers of such movements are obvious — the dangers of undue self-consciousness, of self-righteousness. Sometimes their advocates seem to be lured into idolatry of the group instead of worship and service of the Eternal God. Further, the grace for true Christian fellowship comes not by calculation, though we may hope to prepare a way for it. Probably Luther was right; after conceiving the idea he knew better than to carry it into effect. But whether formalized in organizational forms or not, the tension is here and is needed. Christians are called both to stand for God against the world and to "hold the world together."

In this criticism of pragmatic motivations, a last word should be said in favor of pragmatic evaluations. Any particular program of action should be chosen on the basis of all available facts, technical wisdom, and evaluation of consequences. Traditional Christianity has not been unaware of this necessity, but our modern world has perhaps realized it more fully. It is never enough simply to love. A love that expresses itself only in caresses is absured. A sincere Christian love will be directed toward the good of mankind, and will therefore require thoughtfulness and regard for consequences.

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[2] *The Community Broadsheet*, published by the Community Service Committee, Chancton, Dartnell Park, West Byfleet, Surrey.

Thus, *e. g.,* in the present situation there are an infinite number of ways in which we might express Christian love for people of other nations. On the basis of a pragmatic evaluation of evidence and possibilities, the ERP has been chosen as a way — as the major way. To ignore such attention to actual possibilities and consequences is to sentimentalize love instead of practicing it. It leads to such outlandish plans as are occasionally advanced by idealists — plans which sluice off needed energy into emotive channels. (Of course, even pragmatic decisions must be guided by moral and intellectual principles; this is the difference between the pragmatism of Secretary Marshall and that of Senator Taft.)

But the pragmatically chosen plan requires a more than pragmatic faith to carry it through. The plan is selected because we hope that it can achieve certain results but we cannot be sure of these results. In these clouded days, no results are sure. The man who would act with courage and persistence must find a deeper well-spring of faith. At this point is the place for Tennyson's urging: "Since right is right to follow right, were wisdom in the scorn of consequence." With clouds of atomic dust on the horizon, few will venture far without the imperative and hope of genuine religious faith.

Thus the Christian church — or those within it who are faithful — finds its responsibility in the present situation. We may hope that it will be not only a remnant but also a leaven, stimulating the conscience of a nation. The faithful can fight in every situation, without illusions and without despair. They can be resigned to the contingency of defeat without losing nerve or ceasing to fight.

GOD IS LOVE

God is the love Who wounds our every doubt;
Who is jealous of other gods we trust;
Who turns from fools, and parts unjust from just;
Who levels nations' pride with plague and drought;
Who, sinned against, our sins will find us out;
Who smites false hopes that know Him not to dust;
Who sears and shames and breaks the spirit's lust;
Who exacts our death, and makes fear devout.
Whatever is not God is God's alone,
And God is love or wrath; redeem or slay
God's truth: our faces lighted by His throne
Of grace, or forlorn in a fog of gray
Despair. No greater hell than His is known,
Or heaven than His everlasting way.

— *R. A. Landor*

BOOK REVIEWS

OUR THREATENED VALUES. *By Victor Gollancz.* Henry Regnery Co., 1947.

This book was written by a British socialist in the spring of 1946 and was only recently published in this country. It deals with the moral issue of the occupation of Germany in relation to concrete problems of both British and allied policy. In this context, Gollancz feels that respect for personality is the fundamental value that is threatened.

In the two years since the writing of the book, some of the concrete problems which the writer mentions have been modified, as Gollancz himself envisaged. Moreover, he is probably correct in suggesting that the motivation for such change springs from what is wisest rather than from respect for personality. This kind of observation, however, does not plunge the author into moral cynicism; nor is he contending for ideal values over against political realities. The author is well aware of the latter. He was one of the earliest to speak out against the Nazis and is now engaged in calling attention to the evils of the Russian advance in Europe. But this is done also with a critical eye upon British policy in its role in the world. For example, he feels that the British Labor Party is too closely tied to domestic issues when it ought to be concerned also with the social democrats in Germany and with the welfare of the German people.

What Gollancz is contending for is the proper respect for personality as a part of our Western tradition in the actual implementation of social policy, lest we fall into the sins of the Nazis and transform the Fascist nature in all of us into a normative one. That we have a tendency to do the latter Gollancz sees illustrated all the way from the early non-fraternization policies to present food policies in which starvation is not a human problem but one of whether or not the Germans have enough food to mine badly needed coal. For Gollancz, starvation is an outrage against personality wherever it is found.

Whatever the actions of men may be, Gollancz insists that their common humanity demands that they be treated as persons. This is the central value which must be preserved in the Western world. In the approach to the Germans, this means a proper humility; in the approach to the Russians, it demands tolerance of their intolerance. But it never implies that wrong is to be condoned. It does affirm that realistic social policy must have respect for humanity at its base. It is his contention that only as such an approach informs what we do, will we be able to win central Europe from the hands of the Communists. But also quite apart from the results which such an approach may achieve, the author feels that it is essential in its own right.

Although Gollancz is not a theologian, he affirms that the foundation of his view of personality is grounded in the doctrine of creation. The introduction to the American edition by Rufus Jones only adds confusion, since Gollancz's view of creation is not equivalent to the divinity of man as the fundamental value. Some of the most suggestive passages from Gollancz are those in which he illustrates his premises by reference to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. But in a passage near the end of the book it is not clear that the Christian ethic is seen in proper relation to his view of humanistic socialism. "I am a more passionate socialist than ever I was, as I hope to have shown; but the essential battle today is not between capitalism and mere socialism as such, but between the liberal or Christian ethic, of which humanistic socialism is the crown, and totalitarianism in all its forms. I owe a loyalty to that ethic far greater than my loyalty to any Government that may come and go — even to a Government (Labor) which in spite of everything which can be charged against it, has already some noble achievements to its credit" (216).

Whatever question one may have about this sentence concerning the relation of socialism and Christianity, the direction which Gollancz indicates is clear. Moreover, his contending for a type of socialism which incorporates freedom and the human concerns of men indicates an analysis which is close to the readers of this journal.

JOHN P. DILLENBERGER

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. *By A. Roy Eckardt,* Kings Crown Press, 1948.

This book should lead Christians to think about the problem of the relation between Christians and Jews and about the problem of anti-Semitism on profounder levels than is customary. The book is a doctor's thesis and it should reassure those who contemptuously assume that doctor's theses must deal in a non-commital way with subjects that are sufficiently unimportant to have been so far neglected.

Professor Eckardt gives an extremely useful account, with many quotations from the literature, of the attitude toward the Jewish question in Roman Catholicism, liberal Protestantism, Fundamentalism and what he calls Neo-Reformation theology. Always in discussing liberal theology he seems to be unaware that there is such a thing as evangelical liberalism.

This book in its treatment of anti-Semitism forms an interesting contrast to the recent book on the same subject by Cary McWilliams, *A Mask for Privilege.* McWilliams puts all of the emphasis upon the economic and sociological causes of anti-Semitism. Eckardt admits that these have their place but he is more impressed by the fact that it is the Jews who in many cultures and in many generations have been the victims of persecution for a great variety of alleged reasons. He finds a mystery in the very survival of Israel as a people, in the degree of preoccupation with the Jews that has been characteristic of Christendom, and in the frequent appearance of a strange sadistic fury along with anti-Semitic prejudice. The usual sociological diagnoses of anti-Semitism as a cultural disease do not account for the degree of this fury. His own explanation is that anti-Semitism on the deepest level is a peculiar manifestation of original sin in Christians, that it is a manifestation of an ambivalent attitude of Christians to Christ, that Christians both love and hate Christ and show their hatred by this fury against his people.

I am sure that Eckardt is right that anti-Semitism has deeper roots than are usually recognized. For one thing, even where religious anti-Semitism is no longer avowed, centuries of teaching against the Jews as "Christ-killers," as a people whom God is punishing for their rejection of the Messiah have left their mark in our cultural inheritance. It is also probably true, as many observers have said — Maritain and Barth, for example,— that such enemies of Christianity as the Nazis have first attacked the Judaeo-Christian tradition by attacking the Jews who were more vulnerable to attack than the Christians. Eckardt's thesis leads to the following judgments: that in all Christians original sin expresses itself in conscious or unconscious hatred of Christ and that this leads to conscious or unconscious anti-Semitism as a universal Christian phenomenon. The difficulty with such a diagnosis is that it fails to explain any particular facts. Why does this unconscious anti-Semitism become conscious in some Christians and not in others? Why does anti-Semitism come and go in a particular culture and vary in strength from nation to nation? I doubt very much if the original assumption is valid, that Christians even in their unconscious generally make this connection between their rebellion against the claim of Christ upon them and hatred of Christ's people.

The other major interest of the author is in connection with the responsibility of Christians to convert the Jews to Christianity. Here he is troubled by the fear that acceptance of this responsibility may be an encouragement to anti-Semitism. He presents various views on this subject and

finally accepts one that has been elaborated by Richard Niebuhr. He believes that we should *confess* what Christ means to us but not seek to convert Jews to the Christian religion which as a religion stands under the judgment of Christ together with Judaism. Eckardt is convinced that the Jews have a permanent mission as in a special way representatives of God's universal justice, that the Church is in need and always will be in need of correction from the synagogue. Eckardt says all of this in the context of a high Christological doctrine for he accepts the Christian claim that Christ is the absolutely unique God-Man. There is in his mind no relativism about faith in Christ but there is relativism about faith in Christianity.

It seems to me that there are two assumptions in this argument that are open to question. One is that Judaism can be expected to represent God's universal justice more fully than Christianity. The Synagogue as a minority voice in a conventional Christian culture may sometimes have that role but I see no reason to assume that the ecumenical Church cannot witness to the justice of God as well as the synagogue. Eckardt's espousal of Zionism makes this assumption all the more doubtful, for Zionism links the synagogue with a political form of nationalism.

The other questionable assumption is the distinction that is made between loyalty to Christ and participation in the life of the Christian community. They are not identical and it is clearly true that Christianity stands under the judgment of Christ. And yet loyalty to Christ is only naturally expressed through membership in the Christian community. I agree that the Church will always need correction from outside itself but I am not convinced that the synagogue can be the major source of such correction. Probably the correction will have to come from different sources in different situations.

But when this has been said, it should be admitted that Christians have a unique relationship to the Jews which should cause them to think through in a fresh way the whole problem of the conversion of the Jews. The enormity of the sin of Christians against the Jews must first be fully recognized. This book faces the whole problem with such complete honesty that any thinking that is done on this subject may well begin with it.

JOHN C. BENNETT

UNKNOWN GERMANY, AN INNER CHRONICLE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR. *By Hanna Hafkesbrink.* Yale University Press, $2.50.

There are various ways in which this book can be read, but it will prove fascinating on any level. The most obvious way of reading it is to follow the immediate purpose of the writer, and be grateful for the glimpses she gives us into the soul of Germany, before and during the first world war. To one reader at least the book proved equally rewarding, if regarded as a glimpse into the soul of modern man amidst the insecurities and tumults of our age. Miss Hafkesbrink does no special pleading, but the total effect of her superb analysis of the spiritual reactions of Germans during the war is to prove that the Germans are human beings and that they seek, as we all do, to find some shred of meaning for life in a time of chaos and that they are sometimes betrayed into absurdity and sometimes rise to true nobility in the effort. There are of course some special German accents, but on the whole the reactions are thoroughly human. The special German accents consist primarily in the extravagance in which some viewpoints are held and propounded.

The material is taken both from the writings of the great German men of letters and from the homely epistles of common soldiers. From this material we discover that some Germans welcomed the war as a release from the intolerable tension and uncertainty which preceded it, while others (including Thomas Mann) hailed it as a necessary judgment upon the complacen-

cies and banalities of a bourgeois society. Their rejoicing in its adventures and insecurities was certainly more marked than that of any people, including the Germans, in the second world war. And the "mighty hope" which accompanied the idea of purification and judgment was also pretty well absent in the second conflict.

As the war advanced this enthusiasm turned into boredom, dismay, and disillusionment. Ways had to be found to give moral meaning to its meaninglessness. Sometimes it was found in the strong sense of comradeship and sacrifice which the war encouraged. Sometimes its sufferings were (by Christians) compared to the sufferings of Christ. Others felt uplifted by the sense of doing their duty without quite knowing why. Not a few soldiers found meaning in an identification with their enemies, imaginatively creating a community of those who lived boldly and sacrificially in distinction from those who were safe at home on either side.

The total effect of the volume is of a pathos too deep for tears. For the meanings which the soldiers found in the struggle all implied a hope for a better future than the future fulfilled. To set the sorry realities of the present day in contrast to these hopes is to prove how vain may be the illusions by which men bolster their courage in an evil day. The self-righteous will insist that the German disillusionment was inevitable because their cause was not just or because they did not know in the end how to transmute the divine judgment upon the nation into repentance and newness of life. There will be some justification for such a view. But it must not obscure the pathos of our own situation, the hiatus between our own hopes only a few years ago and the realities in which we now live. R. N.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HUMANITY. *By Pitirim A. Sorokin.* Beacon Press, 1948. $3.00.

Every futility in the moralism of our age has been distilled into this book and a slight touch of Greek orthodox pietism has been added to it. The reconstruction which humanity requires, according to Sorokin, is a very simple one. Selfish men and nations must become unselfish. A "complete liberation from egoism and actual love of the Absolute for all human beings, for all living creatures and for the universe at large is the necessary condition for reaching our goal." This "altruization" of the individual may be achieved, one gathers, by a kind of Yogi practice by "obtaining control of the conscious and the unconscious by the superconscious." Once this new "altruization" became effective, "the states, including the world state, would be subjected to the same universal and legal commandments as apply to private organizations and individuals. Negatively this means that they would be stripped of their sovereignty, especially their right to make war. All armed forces would be disbanded and reduced to a police force." "Marriage and the family must be restored to their place of dignity as the greatest values not to be trifled with." Also a "heightened sense of duty and social service would tend to free political parties and associations from all selfishness, corruption and irresponsibility typical of present day political parties." And so on and so on.

Every problem of individual and collective evil is considered in turn and the ideal solution is applied with monotonous reiteration. These evils would not exist if men and nations were not selfish. They would not be selfish if we only applied the principles of the control of the conscious by the superconscious. St. Paul's cry, "the good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do," never penetrates through these complacent pages. One feels that many thousands of futile moralizing homilies are gathered together in the tautology: "There would be no sin if there were no sin." R. N.

ALTERNATIVE TO FUTILITY. *By Elton Trueblood.* New York: Harper. 1948. 124 pp. $1.00.

This book is the third in a series, of

which *The Predicament of Modern Man* analyzed the spiritual crisis in which we live, and *Foundations for Reconstruction* suggested the religious bases which need to be recovered for our age. The aim of the present book is to indicate practical and concrete steps for the recovery of these bases and their implementation into the life of our society. The suggestions can be summarized in the affirmation that we need the creation of redemptive fellowships or societies, either within or without the church, which meet together in worship, thought, and work, and are governed by a discipline which members impose upon themselves. Readers will note a similarity between this suggestion and the cell groups or ashrams of which one hears these days.

It is well to call attention to the place and power of well disciplined groups. But it is another question whether or not they will accomplish what their protagonists contend. Few assert that these movements will solve the problems of life. Yet, Professor Trueblood cannot refrain from the pious wish that "if there could be such fellowships" (122) or "if enough persons do the same [create fellowships], we shall have a new world" (124). Were he informed by proper foundations for reconstruction, this hope might not be so central or important.

It is interesting if not telling to note the groups which Trueblood cites as avenues from which we might learn of the place and strategy of such fellowships: Christian Endeavor, YWCA, Student Volunteer Movement, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Jehovah's Witnesses, Alcoholics Anonymous, The League of the Kingdom, the New Life Movement, the Iona and Kirkridge communities. Aside from the fact that some of these movements are definitely suspect, few of them stand directly within the context of the classic Christian tradition. The most frequently noted example, the Iona Community, is based on a sacramental theology concerning which serious questions must be asked.

When Professor Trueblood does refer to the early Church, he is impressed by the "infectious fellowships" which redeemed ancient civilized society. However, the complex relation of Christianity and culture is obscured in this unelaborated statement. And this focusing upon the strategy of small Christian groups in the early Church, even if it is correct, places the emphasis at the wrong point. It was the vitality of the faith of the early Christian rather than any problem of strategy which was decisive. In the early Church, strategy does not appear to have been a conscious problem, but rather was dictated by the demands of the faith in the concrete historical circumstances of the ancient world.

If the point of the author in calling attention to various disciplined groups in our time is that we as Christians must be as disciplined as these movements, it is hardly worth the confusion of issues which result from indiscriminate comparisons. If he wishes to suggest that our faith ought to be as strong as the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, or even the Nazis, as Trueblood once suggested, he ought carefully to distinguish between fanaticism and a vital faith. If he wishes to utilize similar groups for the recovery of faith and for the extension of the theological revival of our day into the thinking of the masses, as he suggests on one page (105), he has hit upon one of the central problems. But it is not self-evident that such groups are the primary avenue through which this task can and must be done. A more fundamental problem is still the rebirth of the Church, in which methodology is significant but not primarily the agency of rebirth. From the writing of Professor Trueblood it is not even clear that strategy is connected with proper foundations.

This is a Religious Book Club Selection, and will probably be widely read. One suspects that many a person will end its pages with the feeling of futility rather than with the alternative to futility.

JOHN P. DILLENBERGER

IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES. *By Richard M. Weaver.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1948. 190 pp. $2.75.

Ideas have long range consequences; and the scope of this book is indicated by the fact that the author traces the causes of our contemporary problems back to William of Occam and the triumph of nominalism: "The defeat of logical realism in the great medieval debate was the crucial event in the history of western culture; from this flowed those acts which issue now in modern decadence."

Mr. Weaver sees this modern decadence reflected in certain typical modern ideas and attitudes which threaten to destroy us. The fundamental idea is that this is the only world and the fundamental attitude is that man's happiness consists in pleasure. If this is the only world then it is proper to follow the Baconian program for the conquest of nature; progress in history is the answer to the human quest for happiness, and the end result is materialism and unrestrained egotism in work, in art, in politics and in such religion as remains. Nominalism reduces the individual to an atom and it treats community as something nominal rather than real; it is at best the arena where the individual finds such satisfaction as he can in terms of success, passive pleasure, or fame (notoriety). But society cannot exist without some cohesive power which goes beyond self-interest. Therefore there must follow what Mr. Weaver calls "The Great Stereopticon" – the enterprise of propaganda using the press, the radio, and the movies. The cynical scepticism with which this program is conducted is matched only by the cynical scepticism with which it is received; and both are the products of nominalism – the atomization of the individual and society and the abolition of real universals and a real universe. Meanwhile, reformers still under the dominance of nominalism, thinking that our problems can be solved by further atomization, pile nominalistic nostrum upon nominalistic nostrum; but, as Mr. Weaver points out, they are like a drunkard who thinks that the only cure for his terrible hangover is more liquor. The only solution is to give up the liquor and return to real life.

Many of Mr. Weaver's observations are profound and many of his criticisms are astute; but this reviewer found that his enthusiasm was waning as he got farther into the book. Mr. Weaver's criticisms are directed at bourgeois capitalism as well as at socialistic thinking in general – the findings and proposals of social scientists; but some of his criticisms of democracy and his extolling of the aristocratic virtues leave one with a profound dissatisfaction. His contention that the insistence on equality destroys fraternity contains truth, no doubt; the crusade for equality feeds upon and is food for self-interest; rights are emphasized at the expense of duties. But equality remains as a desideratum in certain areas; and in still others it is an imperative. The lack of equality between negroes and whites is, in Myrdal's phrase, "The American Dilemma." Perhaps Mr. Weaver would have something penetrating to say about this dilemma if he were to turn his attention to it; but the fact that he does not mention it even though he says a great deal about equality is indicative of a high-minded astigmatism at best.

No doubt he would reply to this that he is concerned with long range factors. But slavery or serfdom underlay certain of the societies which he admires (such as Athens, the Middle Ages, and the antebellum South) and the dissolution of those societies can hardly be accounted for apart from the resentment of the exploited groups, classes or races toward the hierarchy. So this is not simply "The American Dilemma" but a perennial problem.

Mr. Weaver also does not mention the fact that hierarchies have invariably assumed themselves to be more virtuous and more necessary to the social body than they really are; and that often they have accepted or taken privileges far beyond those correlative with their responsibilities. One

reason he does not see this is because he fails completely to understand the radical paradox of the New Testament bound up in the doctrine of original sin and salvation through the Cross. It is of course true that St. Paul has a deeper conception of wisdom in mind when he contrasts the wisdom of the world with the foolishness of God. But it is a travesty to say, as does Mr. Weaver, that "the central teaching of the New Testament is that those who accept the word acquire wisdom and at the same time some identification with the eternal, usually figured as everlasting life." Mr. Weaver would do well to study what Tillich has to say about Logos and Kairos.

Despite these criticisms there is much that is commendable in this book. What Mr. Weaver says about piety, reverence, and tradition will make many emancipated moderns squirm. And even what he says about equality in relation to fraternity is worthy of attention: it raises a question which it will take some profound thinking to answer. It is worth pointing out, following a thought of Bergson's, that if democracy can be said to be composed of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the first two pull in opposite directions and threaten to tear democracy apart. It can be held together only by fraternity overarching and undergirding the other two. But all three are necessary. Fraternity alone is not enough: too much injustice has been committed in history in the name of brotherhood. Yet, it is, perhaps, that member of the triad which needs the most emphasis at the present.

RICHARD W. DAY

CONTRIBUTORS

John Hutchison, formerly professor of religion at Wooster College, is spending a year in Scotland and Switzerland before taking the chair of religion at Williams College. He has been a frequent contributor to *Christianity and Society.*

Edmond L. Cherbonnier, a former naval aviator, was graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1947. Awarded the seminary's travelling fellowship, he is now studying at Cambridge University, England.

Charles Arbuthnot became acquainted with Italy and France as a chaplain throughout the military campaigns in those countries. After two years back in the United States, he returned with his family to France to take part in reconstruction work under the Presbyterian Board. His impressions of the French situation have appeared previously in this quarterly.

Sam Franklin is professor of applied Christianity at Japan Theological Seminary, Tokyo. He was a pre-war missionary to Japan and a naval chaplain in the Pacific. He was also for several years head of the Delta Co-operative Farms in Mississippi.

Charles C. West, who formerly held the travelling fellowship of Union Theological Seminary, is teaching at the College of Chinese Studies in Peking. He was author of the much-discussed "Christianity in Communist North China," in *Christianity and Crisis,* Oct. 13, 1947.

Roger L. Shinn is instructor in philosophy of religion at Union Theological Seminary. He was a war-time infantry company commander in Europe, and is author of *Beyond This Darkness.*

R. A. Landor, of Berkeley, California, has frequently contributed poetry to *Christianity and Society.*

Reviewers: John C. Bennett is professor of Christian theology and ethics in Union Theological Seminary. Richard W. Day is assistant professor of contemporary civilization in Hobart College. John P. Dillenberger is instructor in religion at Princeton University.